

MAY 19 1922

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" P A R I S E T T E "

Episode eight.

The FAMILY-HOUSE.

Cogolin dressed up as a country woman was proceeding towards Nice on the deserted road passing through the Mont-Boron woods. He was walking quietly along, thinking himself quite safe, when danger lurked through the bushes in the shape of a vagrant. The latter having caught sight of a woman tried to get into conversation, but Cogolin stopped him short by saying: "I'm not whom you think", as this did not seem sufficient, a few blows well inflicted soon helped him to get rid of the untoward individual.

Cogolin

Night had come when he entered the town. He saw and entered a family-house and asked for a room. "A maid's room"? enquired the attendant disdainfully, giving Cogolin the usual form to fill up. What name would he put down? The first one that came to his mind was that of Melanie Parent which he wrote down without more ado. "We have already someone ~~that~~ staying here under this name" remarked the attendant, but Cogolin seemed to think the matter of no importance as he answered her by a question denoting his surprise and astonishment: "What is Mr. Lapusse doing here?...." for the latter was just coming in, in appearance satisfied and smiling, seeming quite at home. Mr. Lapusse was indeed at home, he was the proprietor's new partner. At this information Cogolin flew up the stairs into his room.

In the interval Mrs. Parent came in. She was informed that a lady having the same name as herself had just come to live in the Family-House. Some relative, no doubt, thought Melanie. Nevertheless her *curiosity* surprised was aroused and she greatly wished to see her. She ran to the room No. 24 and saw an old acquaintance: Mr. Bourgeois! She then learnt Mrs. Stefan's secret and admired Cogolin's conduct.

From one confidence to another everything of importance was told. The Bank Receiver explained how easy it was for Mr. Lapusse to enter into his little flat in Paris and Melanie told him the new partner had offered to show her some family jewels which he kept in his private room on the first floor. Cogolin advised her to try and get the offer renewed and to accept it. This was easy to Melanie and it was arranged he would show them to her after dinner.

Whilst Cogolin was scheming and giving his instruction to Melanie, Mr. and Mrs. Stefan arrived at Nice and became Mr. De Costabella's ~~guests~~ guests. Parisette informed them that she has seen her uncle that same morning, and each one, save Mrs. Stefan, searched in vain for the reasons which had forced Cogolin's disappearance and his silence.

And the Banker, inveterate gambler, went to pay a visit to the Casino.

Meanwhile the appointed time for interview was drawing near.

Cogolin hid himself in the room where Mélanie was to see Mr. Lapusse and awaited events. Mr. Lapusse and Mélanie soon came in, Mr. Lapusse being very attentive, offering drinks and gallant compliments. But Mélanie was impatient and wanted to see the jewels which were fetched and showed to her with two bundles of letters said to have more value than the jewels.

At this Cogolin came out of his hiding place revolver in hand, ordering Mr. Lapusse to write as he would dictate. "I declare I am the murderer of Madame Germinot, widow, for which crime the Bank Receiver, Cogolin, is being wanted." "You won't kill me", jeered the culprit, "nor will you denounce me because it would cause the scandal you wish to avoid at all price"!... Hearing these words the indignant Mélanie got hold of the letters and gave them to Cogolin telling him: "Take this and go, I'll see to what can be done."

Indeed what could be done?... Mrs. Parent did not know exactly what to do. She took the revolver left by Cogolin, she would kill the wretch. She had a few drinks to strengthen her determination, then she pulled the trigger. Mr. Lapusse fell. Mélanie went to the drawing-room where the first report of the shot had been heard alarming the occupants. "Mr. Lapusse had trapped me, I've killed him," she declared them.

As a matter of fact she had killed no one. Her hand being a bit shaky and Lapusse, being an old one at the game, had pretended to be dead. When he got up, after Mélanie had gone down, and quietly vanished. And those who were looking for the victim every where and had found nothing, not even the slightest trace of blood, had gone down again and their pitying looks told plainly that they were convinced that poor Mélanie was mad.

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